

Nordic Walking Poles

Summer is here!!!! Time to take out the hiking boots/walking shoes. It is also a good time to consider getting a pair of hiking poles (HP) or Nordic Walking Poles (NWP). In deciding which to get consider this analogy: Hiking poles compare to a mountain bikes while Nordic Walking Poles compare to road bikes.

Here are some differences between HP and NWP. So depending what you are going to do will help you decide which one to get. HP are designed for trail hiking- they have 3 sections for adjustment, the tip is flat the hand grip is for either hand, the straps are loose. They are adjustable in length (longer for walking down hills and short for uphill). Some have baskets that can be put on when hiking on ground that you do not want the tip to sink into. When going uphill you should put more weight through the pole and for longer until the pole is behind your body; giving a good push with your arms. Downhill the poles are lengthened and used in front of the body. This helps to break the downhill momentum and takes a significant stress off the knees. Hiking poles help to prevent slips and falls. They help with balance and stability especially on uneven trails.

The Nordic Walking poles are generally lighter than hiking poles and have specific hand grip for each hand; a thumb clip clips into pole all for keeping the hand comfortable and the pole at a good angle for propulsion. The tip of the NWP is set on a 45 degree angle specific to promote the stride in Nordic walking. In Nordic walking the pole tip is meant to engage at the sides and behind the body while walking to get a pushing action from the arms. Doing this recruits up to 90% of the muscles of your body as both legs and arms are used-it increase total body exertion without increasing perceived effort. This is because the poles actually aid in propelling you along your way. Walking with NWP will burn 20 to 40% more calories than walking at the same speed without poles. Nordic poles are meant for fitness. Using them once the proper technique is mastered is a remarkable way to gain fitness with less chance of runner's injuries.

It is well accepted walking is the most convenient and easiest way to fitness. Walking is good for us on all levels mentally and physically and it also helps to control chronic conditions as overweight, high blood pressure, and diabetics. There is now strong evidence that physical activity such as walking not only will help with cancer cure but also help in preventing recurrence of cancer. Osteoporosis is a concern in our older population especially for woman. However with the sedentary lifestyle and longer life span more and more men are now being diagnosed with osteoporosis. Nordic Walking Poles walking is becoming a very popular and safe choice of activity for people who have osteoporosis or any other health concern as mentioned above.

The physiotherapy staff at Sunshine Physiotherapy is dedicated to healthy life style. One of our physiotherapists Celia Gjosund is now offering an assessment of persons with osteoporosis followed by education on proper biomechanics and safe exercise program not only to prevent fractures but to promote a healthier lifestyle and healthier bones. Here at Sunshine Physiotherapy, we are well prepared to address any biomechanical condition that might interfere with walking as a means of fitness.